

worst kind of pandering to mortgage the future to serve current political needs.

Instead, it's time for our presidential candidates to talk about their vision, their plan to support our economy and our infrastructure needs.

#### OLYMPIC TORCH THUGS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, with the Olympic torch traveling the world right now, we are seeing the Chinese Government's true repressive colors. Everywhere it stops, it is accompanied by a group of Chinese guards who have been called "thugs" in the press.

I am not surprised that Chinese leaders would send secret police along to protect the torch, but I am surprised the United States would be so complicit in putting down dissent that they would allow members of the Chinese secret police into the United States to ensure the security of the relay.

Are we so concerned with appeasing China that we could not ensure the security of the flame ourselves?

The group designated to protect the torch is from the paramilitary People's Armed Police, the same force that helped to violently quash the recent protests in Tibet, now using brute force to ensure that protestors in cities like Paris, London and San Francisco, will not interrupt the ceremonial relay.

Maybe the Chinese need to be reminded that repression and torture are not Olympic sports.

#### IT'S NOT NEARLY ENOUGH

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, as many as 2.8 million Americans could lose their homes in the next 5 years due to the subprime mortgage crisis, yet the Bush administration refuses to properly address the crisis.

Last month the administration was willing to bail out Bear Stearns, but when they announced their plans to overhaul the regulation of financial institutions, they failed to properly address any of the needs of families who face the loss of their homes in the coming months.

The housing crisis demands bold action, and this House has already responded by passing legislation that would expand affordable mortgage loans opportunities to families at risk of foreclosure.

We've also passed bills that would raise Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac loan limits to increase liquidity in the mortgage market and that would increase the supply of affordable housing. And now we have a plan that would help 1.5 million homeowners afford foreclosure.

Madam Speaker, we hope the administration will join us in supporting these important bills that will provide necessary relief to those families feeling the impact of the housing crisis.

#### LAST CURTAIN CALL FOR FREE SPEECH IN FRANCE

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the curtain has dropped on the stage of free speech in Paris, France for actress Brigitte Bardot. The birthplace of enlightenment has now become home to conformity and political correctness, and rigid speech control.

In France, if speech is offensive, a person can be fined and imprisoned. That's what French prosecutors are trying to do to Brigitte Bardot, claiming she incited racial hatred toward the Muslim community.

Bardot wrote comments in a letter to Nicolas Sarkozy that offended Muslims. Bardot, an animal rights activist, denounced a Muslim festival that including slaughtering sheep by saying she was "fed up with being led by this population which is destroying us, and destroying France."

Now the French speech control police claim it's a crime to speak ill of Muslims. So much for freedom of speech in progressive France.

Speech control is a throwback to the Dark Ages when no one could say anything bad about the king. Gone is the citizen Voltaire's philosophy of "I may disapprove of what you say, but I will defend it to the death for you to say it."

But today French citizens that speak their mind may face the modern day Bastille if they offend Muslims or hurt their feelings. It looks like the last curtain call for actress Brigitte Bardot and free speech in France.

And that's just the way it is.

#### CONGRATULATING MARK SMITH ON HIS RETIREMENT AS PRESIDENT OF THE IOWA FEDERATION OF LABOR

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and my hero, Mark Smith, and to congratulate Mark on his retirement as President of the Iowa Federation of Labor.

Over the past 34 years, Mark has been a fierce advocate for Iowa's working families. He started as an instructor at the University of Iowa Labor Center in 1974; was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Iowa Fed in 1979, and served in that position until he was elected President of the Iowa Federation of Labor in 1997.

Mark has dedicated his life to the cause of working men and women in Iowa. Protecting the rights of workers

has been a long and difficult struggle, and no one has given more time and energy to the cause than Mark Smith.

Mark is living proof that one person can make an enormous difference in the lives of thousands of individuals. Many of the people he helped never knew what he did for them and never had a chance to thank him personally. I stand here today on their behalf, because I want Mark to know that nameless people here are honoring his lifetime of heroic efforts. His lifetime of service leaves a legacy that challenges future generations of labor leaders to continue his efforts to further the cause of working families.

Mark may have retired from office, but he will never retire from his real passion, speaking out against injustice and pushing people to do more to take care of each other.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER SILVIO BERLUSCONI

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, this week Silvio Berlusconi has been reelected as Prime Minister of Italy. His coalition won a strong majority in the Italian Parliament.

Prime Minister-elect Berlusconi, the conservative leader of the Forza Italia political party and the new People of Freedom party, had been a strong ally of the United States in his previous tenure as Prime Minister. No doubt his reelection will mean a strengthening of our partnership with the people of Italy who have so positively influenced American culture.

Berlusconi's election follows a growing line of European leaders, including Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, who have run on a platform of greater support for a strong alliance with America. Additional presidents promoting improved friendship with America have recently been elected in Indonesia, Serbia, Liberia, Peru, Korea and Russia.

America has earned admiration of most nations in the world, as identified yesterday by Pope Benedict XVI at the White House as he indicated America is the beacon of liberty and freedom.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

#### CHILDREN ARE A PRECIOUS RESOURCE

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, as the co-chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I have worked on issues dealing with child